

# Families & Learning

A PUBLICATION OF THE CONNECTICUT STATEWIDE FAMILY LITERACY INITIATIVE, A PROJECT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Family Literacy ~ Every Family, Every Day

**F**amilies practice family literacy all the time without knowing it – reading with a child, watching and discussing TV, helping with homework, having conversations at meals or the supermarket. Here are just some of the ways to enhance literacy in everyday activities:

*Working together* to write shopping lists, read coupons or recipes, pay bills.

*Reading together* - a novel, TV guide, labels and information on videos or CDs, and religious materials.

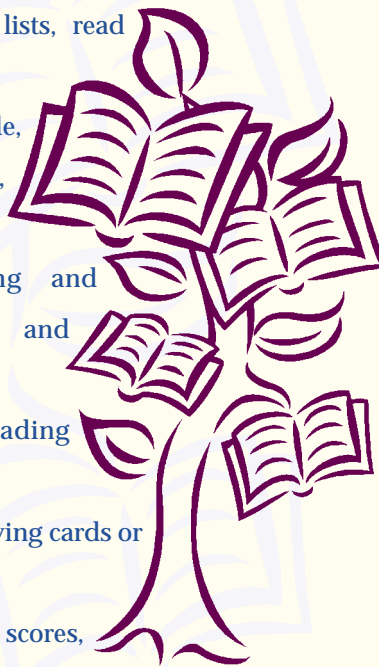
*Helping with homework;* reviewing and discussing school papers; reading and responding to messages from school.

*Writing notes* to one another; reading messages on greeting cards.

*Having fun* while singing together, playing cards or board games, and telling stories.

*Using the newspaper* to find baseball scores, check the weather forecast or movie times.

What happens at home does make a difference. Children who are read to 30 minutes every day from birth enter kindergarten with **900 hours** of reading experience. Those who are read to only 30 minutes a week enter school with **just 60 hours** of this important preparation. That is **840 hours of difference** family literacy can make in a child's first 5 years. Imagine the difference as kids grow up in families that enjoy literacy every day!



## Schools Promote Family Literacy Fun

**Reading Starts with Us:** New Britain Public Schools. *Reading Starts with Us* is a family literacy program published by Scholastic, which promotes the value of families reading together. Workshops introduce parents to many types of children's literature and teach fun strategies to help children become better readers. These strategies can be used by families at all literacy levels. For more information on how it is used in New Britain, please contact Adnelly Marichal, Assistant Coordinator of Language Arts, (860) 827-2245.

**Family Geography Challenge:** Morley School, West Hartford. The Family Geography Challenge is an easy to use kit published by National Geographic, which helps schools recruit families to discover more about the world through current events. The Challenge kickoff is a fun one-hour workshop at which families learn how to use news media, maps and questions to learn geography together. For more information on how well it worked at Morley School, please contact Erin McGurk, Curriculum Specialist, (860) 233-8535.

**Parents + Schools = Student Success:** Danbury Public Schools Community Resource Center. The curriculum, developed by the Resource Center's Adult Education and Parent Involvement Programs, combines ESL instruction, information that helps parents understand and negotiate schools, and parent and child activities. Topics include understanding report cards, what to do at parent teacher conferences and the importance of parent involvement. For more information on this innovative curriculum, please contact Virginia Mitchell, WERACE Program Director, (203) 797-4731.

# Awareness to Action

Impact of family literacy increases, schools and organizations  
Expanding Connecticut's existing network of family literacy  
Programs and practices?

Accept limited literacy is a significant barrier to successful participation	Encourage limited literacy parents to enroll in literacy classes	Have formal relationship with literacy programs to provide literacy services to families	Include literacy instruction some fam program componen
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## Awareness to Action?

Family literacy can be part of the action?

Literacy Initiative surveyed  
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Connecticut families! Family  
program that touches families.  
m be part of the action?

The 4 Components of  
Family Literacy:

**Early Childhood Education.** Appropriate education for success in school.

**Parenting Education.** Parents on how to work with teacher for their children in their children.

**Adult Learning.** Parents that leads to economic improvement.

**Parent and Child Time.** Interactive time between parents and children.

Unaware	Aware	Aware	Aware	Aware	Aware	Action
Believe family literacy level not relevant to full participation in programs	Maintain literacy needed for some programs or materials	Accept limited literacy is a significant barrier to successful participation	Encourage limited literacy parents to enroll in literacy classes	Have formal relationship with literacy programs to provide literacy services to families	Include literacy instruction in some family program components	Include Family Literacy as a service component

## Are You Part of the Action?

Family literacy can be part of any program.

- Offer all 4 components of family literacy
- Recruit families throughout the year
- Formally evaluate outcomes for both children and parents, or for families as a unit
- Maintain family participation for at least 6 months
- At least 1 staff member has a graduate degree

**Early Childhood Education.** Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

**Parenting Education.** Training for parents on how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in their children's education.

**Adult Learning.** Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

**Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time.** Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.

Connecticut's Family Development Credential and Training Program (FDC) is moving at a fast pace. Recently 49 professionals were certified as FDC trainers, and classes are being offered throughout the state. An important focus of the training is worker empowerment. How can you work with families in empowering ways, when you may not always feel empowered yourself? Here are some ideas from the curriculum for how you can help create the conditions for empowerment - for yourself, as well as the families with whom you work. *Develop a personal vision for your work • Spend your time doing what is important not just what is urgent • Create a support system for yourself • Balance your work and family life • Create your own stress management and wellness program.*

For more information contact Betsy LeBoriosis, Family Development Credential Coordinator at 860-509-3615.